The State-wise figures for 1999-2000 are given below:—

Andhra Pradesh	3045
Karnataka	12
Maharashtra	27
Uttar Pradesh	61
West Bengal	350
Tamil Nadu	187
Kerala	500
Orissa	319
Assam	47

Top priority has been accorded to this Scheme by the Office of Welfare Commissioner, Hyderabad. In the last 2 years a large number of districts in Andhra Pradesh has been personally visited by the Welfare Commissioner which include Karimnagar, Medak, Adilabad, Ranga Reddi, Nalgonda, Krishna, Nizamabad, Chittoor, Cuddapah, West Godavari, Guntur and Kurnool.

Based on the inspections made by the Welfare Commissioner and other officers of the Ministry of Labour, the progress is reviewed, funds are released where necessary and efforts are made to ensure that the funds allocated for the purpose are utilised in time.

Impact of Restrictions on Bidi Workers

4944. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 2999 given in Rajya Sabha on 20th April, 2000 and state:

(a) whether any study has been done on the impact of restrictions on bici on their employment;

(b) if so, details of such a study;

(c) whether the Ministry is keeping a close watch on the impact of any measures which will drastically reduce employment amongst the bidi workers below the poverty line;

(d) what does the study show in this regard; and

(e) steps proposed to ensure that government are alert on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHIR MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (e) The study commissioned to assess the impact of various regulatory restrictions contemplated to control and reduce tobacco consumption in the country on direct employment in tobacco industry, envisages that the impact on employment scenario in the tobacco sector will be directly proportional to the rate of reduction in consumption of tobacco. However, the effect of reduction will be felt over different time frames by various labour segments such as cultivators, manufacturers, processors, agents, traders, etc. in the field.

The appropriate authorities are advised from time to time to take into account the concerns of various organisations while initiating actions on such issues.

Socio-Economic Status of Tendu-Leaf Collectors

4945. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Director General of Labour Welfare has made any assessment of the socio-economic status of the Tendu leaf collector in the unorganised sector;

(b) if so, when this study was completed;

(c) whether any State-wise data has been compiled;

(d) if so, the State-wise figures of Tendu leaf collectors;

(e) whether DGLW has initiated any programme for their welfare; and

(0 if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (0 Tendu leaf collection is a seasonal activity in which large number of workers are involved, mainly in Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. No official study has been commissioned on their socio-economic status.

Although tendu leaf collectors in the country are wide spread and their number is reported to be large, their exact size so far has not been reflected in any Census report. Some State Governments provide various kinds of welfare